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- Today's Insider (PDF)



YOU DON'T SAY...

"Delaying these rules that protect students is irresponsible and reckless."

Attorney General Josh Stein, on a lawsuit intended to help protect students who have been taken advantage of by for-profit colleges.

THE NEWS & OBSERVER, 7/06/17

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News Summary

Elections Board

North Carolina's election oversight board has been vacant for more than a month, but the N.C. Supreme Court is poised to decide if Gov. Roy Cooper must make appointments to the new board designed by Republicans. Cooper last week asked the Supreme Court to block the law creating the State Board of Elections and Ethics Enforcement, which would be split equally among Republicans and Democrats -- a change from the previous elections board, which was controlled by the governor's party.

Attorneys for House Speaker Tim Moore and Senate leader Phil Berger called on the court Monday to deny the request, and both the GOP legislative leaders and the N.C. Republican Party say Cooper needs to make appointments immediately. A statement from Moore and Berger last week

says the board "sits vacant with no accountable oversight of lobbying, ethics or campaign finance." Agency staff members are in charge of the elections and ethics board for now but can't take any actions that require the board to weigh in.

On Wednesday, a Cooper spokesman said the governor wants the Supreme Court to make a decision before he acts. "We need to let the court process unfold and find a resolution," spokesman Ford Porter said in an email.

Cooper's request has already been rejected by a three-judge Superior Court panel and the N.C. Court of Appeals. The Court of Appeals order, dated June 16, doesn't provide a reason for the decision or list which judges were involved. While the Court of Appeals is dominated by Republican judges, Democrats hold a narrow majority on the Supreme Court.

In the request seeking a block on the new law, Cooper's attorneys said that if the Supreme Court sides with the governor, he'll immediately appoint five new members to the old version of the election board. That board would consist of three Democrats and two Republicans. But if the court rejects the request, he'll appoint members to the new board -- four from each political party, selected from a list submitted by the parties.

Cooper's lawsuit argues the change in the elections board violates the constitutional separation of powers, and his attorneys urged the Supreme Court to take the case.

"The Governor -- no matter his or her political affiliation -- must have a forum for the adjudication of serious constitutional questions relating to the proper allocation of powers," the filing says.

"Alternatively, this Court may decide to avoid the question, likely ensuring continued political gamesmanship between and among the three branches until North Carolina devolves into a government of 'men' rather than a 'government of laws.' "

Cooper's attorneys also oppose the provision that gives the legislature power to pick the agency's executive director.

Attorneys for Berger and Moore, in their Monday filing with the Supreme Court, say Cooper "ramps up the bombast that without an injunction, even for a day, the rule of law in our state will erode to the whims of those in power ... This court need not engage in such hyperbole."

The elections board law was passed in a December special session of the legislature and revised in April in response to court rulings. The elections and ethics agencies merged in early June when courts declined to block the law.

The N.C. Republican Party said Wednesday that Cooper "is refusing to do his job and choosing to leave North Carolina as the only state unable to enforce its elections laws."

"Gov. Cooper is solely responsible for there currently being no ethics or elections enforcement in North Carolina," NCGOP executive director Dallas Woodhouse said in an email. "It is clear that Gov. Cooper thinks he can pick and choose the laws he wants to follow, and ignore the multiple court rulings telling him to appoint the new bipartisan ethics and elections enforcement board."

The NCGOP has already made its nominations for the new board, but the N.C. Democratic Party says it's "going to let the court process play out" before announcing any selections.(Colin Campbell, THE NEWS & OBSERVER, 7/06/17).

Special Election

North Carolina Republican legislative leaders are re-affirming opposition to a special election this fall or winter for General Assembly seats, but say they're prepared to redraw districts for the scheduled November 2018 election. The lawmakers' attorneys responded Thursday to a Greensboro federal court seeking input about what to do after last month's U.S. Supreme Court ruling. Justices agreed nearly 30 districts are racial gerrymanders and should be thrown out. But the high court rejected the Greensboro court's order for a special election and wrote more work was needed evaluating whether it's necessary.

The GOP leaders say they've already laid out a schedule to draw new maps by this November. They say accelerating the timetable could short-circuit public and legislative feedback on maps and could prevent orderly elections. "Any court-ordered special election would almost certainly require a reduction in the voting opportunities and mechanisms that voters have come to expect and increase the potential for election errors," wrote Phil Strach, an attorney for the GOP lawmakers.

The state of North Carolina and State Board of Elections also filed their own statement in U.S. District Court late Thursday. The state takes no position on whether a special election is warranted

or on a preferred schedule for map drawing, Special Deputy Attorney General Alexander Peters wrote, but a prompt decision would best serve the public interest.

The plaintiffs for voters who sued successfully over the maps last month urged the court to again order a special election later this year, saying it's feasible. The illegal boundaries have burdened millions of voters since they were first drawn in 2011 and need to be replaced, the voters' lawyers said.(THE ASSOCIATED PRESS, 7/06/17).

Civil Rights Center

A committee studying alternative paths for a University of North Carolina center that offers legal help to the poor found no options that would allow the center to continue the full breadth of its work while also satisfying conservatives who oppose how it operates. The committee appointed by the chancellor of the Chapel Hill campus examined five options for changing the course of the UNC Center for Civil Rights, which prominent civil rights attorney Julius Chambers founded in 2001. The committee's report found none that would allow the center to keep representing clients the way it currently does while satisfying critics, who say the center's courtroom work doesn't fit with the education mission of the country's oldest public university.

The chancellor convened the study at the behest of the state Board of Governors, which sets policy for the 16-campus system. Conservatives on the board want to strip the center of its ability to file lawsuits, removing its biggest weapon.

Center supporters have said that changing the center's mission or moving it out from the umbrella of the UNC-Chapel Hill law school would diminish its work.

Only one alternative -- renaming the center after Chambers and defining its educational role more precisely-- allows the center to continue its work while keeping its structure largely the same, the report says. And that doesn't address the concern that opponents have regarding a center affiliated with UNC suing other government entities. The center has, for example, sued public school systems on behalf of clients alleging discrimination.

Other alternatives assume the groups that fund the center, which receives no state money, would continue to do so if the center is no longer affiliated with UNC, the report says. "It would not be fair to assume that the center can survive these challenges, and the UNC-CH committee does not want its identification of these alternatives to be seen as an endorsement of their viability," it concludes.

The Board of Governors meets later this month, when the education committee is scheduled to discuss the center's future. The full board could consider the education committee's recommendation in September. Chambers, who endured firebomb attacks of his home, office and car in the 1960s and 1970s as he fought segregation, founded the center and served as its first director. The report cites his legacy repeatedly.

Aside from the name change, the committee proposes four separate alternatives: change the center into a law school civil rights clinic; outsource litigation with ongoing support; outsource litigation with no ongoing support; or move the center into a nonprofit structure not associated with the university.

Each has disadvantages for the center, for its opponents or both, the report says.

The report saves its strongest language for the final alternative, saying that if the center is no longer associated with UNC, "the university would lose an important historical connection to the legacy of Julius Chambers, to the civil rights movement and to its own journey to address the effects of racial discrimination. ... Julius Chambers was one of, if not the, pre-eminent civil rights lawyer of his generation, and his legal work helped transform North Carolina away from a history of segregation based on race."

Neither center director Ted Shaw nor the center's managing attorney, Mark Dorosin, responded to phone or email messages.

The report didn't change the mind of attorney Joe Knott, a member of the Board of Governors' committee that will recommend whether the center should continue litigation. "The law school is not a law firm," he said. "We should not represent clients, and we should not be doing litigation."(Martha Waggoner, THE ASSOCIATED PRESS, 7/06/17).

Jobs

A technology firm based in India plans to bring 2,000 jobs to Wake County with an average starting salary above \$72,000, state officials announced Thursday morning, in a deal that includes some \$25 million in state grants and other supports. Infosys will be looking to hire local software developers, analysts, architects and other technology professionals for its outsourcing services. The company says it plans to add as many as 10,000 U.S. jobs in the coming years, with four hubs around the country.

To get its full incentives package in North Carolina, Infosys won't have to hit 100 percent of its targets, but close. It must create and retain 1,600 new jobs in Wake County with a minimum average salary of about \$65,000, according to the details of the deal. The average salary now across Wake County is about \$54,000, according to state officials.

The company already has a presence in North Carolina, and the new jobs must be in addition to the 1,138 here now, a Commerce Department spokeswoman said Thursday. The company says it has some 200,000 employees worldwide. It focuses on technology and outsourcing, among other things.

In 2013, the company settled a lawsuit with the U.S. Department of Justice over its usage of work visas, agreeing to pay \$34 million. At the time, the Justice Department said it was the largest payment ever levied in an immigration case. Infosys was accused of circumventing H-1B visa regulations to bring in workers to perform skilled labor in order to cut costs. Those jobs otherwise would have gone to American citizens or legitimate H-1B visa holders, the department said in a news release at the time.

During Thursday's press conference, Infosys President Ravi Kumar said the company already has a number of clients in the Triangle, and that executives also were attracted by the universities in the area, whose graduates could help fill some of the new jobs, as well as the region's entrepreneurial culture. "I'm actually told that Wake County has 500-plus startups. That was a huge, attractive value-added proposition for us to locate ourselves in Wake County," Kumar said at a news conference.

The incentives break down like this: Nearly \$22.4 million over 12 years from the state's Job Development Investment Grant program, which is used to lure major employers into the state. The state's community college system will commit another \$3 million to the project. Wake County and other local governments could sweeten the pot further.

"I think that you'll see some people be able to get into some second careers here," Gov. Roy Cooper said.

Even though Wake County has a 3.7 percent unemployment rate and some rural counties have double-digit jobless rates, Cooper said the state is willing to spend money to attract jobs to North Carolina, regardless of where they are created.

"What we want are better-paying jobs," he said. "If they can quit their \$35,000 a year job, get training, get a \$65,000 a year job, that's the kind of thing we want for North Carolina."

Still, the governor said, recruiters are working on projects that will benefit rural counties as well. "We've got to emphasize investment in education so that we can make sure that these companies have the workforce," he said. "That's the No. 1 thing that they talk to us about is the workforce -- and one of the challenges for our rural areas."

Infosys plans to spend \$8.7 million on capital investments by the end of 2018 under this deal, with a minimum requirement of about \$7.9 million to get its full incentives. The state estimates this project will produce more than \$24 million in state revenue between its start date and 2029 and increase North Carolina's gross domestic product by \$2.9 billion by then statewide.

The \$22.4 million incentive grant is the seventh-largest JDIG award announced since 2003, according to the most recent state Commerce Department data. The state announced larger grants for other large companies like Fidelity and Electrolux in the Triangle and Mecklenburg County, respectively, where unemployment has been lowest. Economic development officials approved the state's largest grant -- \$87.2 million -- for MetLife in early 2013 after the company pledged to add 2,600 jobs in Wake and Mecklenburg counties.(WRAL NEWS, 7/06/17).

Student Loan Protections

N.C. Attorney General Josh Stein says a lawsuit he joined Thursday could help students who attended fraudulent, for-profit colleges ease their federal student-loan debt. Stein joined other attorneys general from around the country to sue U.S. Education Secretary Betsy DeVos, who

moved last month to freeze rules that aimed to erase the federal loan debt of students cheated by predatory for-profit colleges.

The attorneys general, all Democrats, from 18 states and the District of Columbia accuse the education secretary of breaking federal law and giving private for-profit schools free rein by rescinding the Borrower Defense rule that was to go into effect on the first of this month. They filed the lawsuit Thursday in federal court in the District of Columbia.

The rule was adopted late last year before former President Barack Obama left office. It was created to protect student borrowers by making it easier for students at colleges found to be fraudulent to have their federal loans forgiven. The rule was created after nearly two years of negotiations, following the collapse of Corinthian Colleges, a national for-profit chain which enrolled thousands of North Carolina students, Stein pointed out.

But last month, DeVos said the education department wanted to re-evaluate the rule, calling it a "muddled process that's unfair to students and schools." The rollback came after a lawsuit was filed in federal court by an association of for-profit colleges in California seeking to block the rule. The attorneys general who filed the lawsuit this week are from California, Connecticut, Delaware, Hawaii, Iowa, Illinois, Maryland, Massachusetts, Minnesota, New Mexico, New York, North Carolina, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Vermont, Virginia, Washington, and the District of Columbia.

"The delayed rules are deeply troubling," Stein said in a statement. "Students who borrow money for their education are taking a risk to improve their lives -- and they must be protected from those who take advantage of vulnerable student borrowers. Delaying these rules that protect students is irresponsible and reckless." Stein said the federal education department abandoned the notice and public comment process required under federal law to change such rules and highlighted some of the protections included in the Obama administration rule.

The rule would have required schools at risk of closing to put up financial collateral. It also banned mandatory arbitration agreements, which prevented many students from suing schools they believed to have defrauded them.

The National Education Association praised the attorneys general for bringing a lawsuit.

"It is simply wrong that the Department of Education would want to do away with regulations that would protect students," the organization's president Lily Eskelsen Garcia said in a statement. "It is no surprise that these regulations have been strongly opposed by for-profit schools, which have saddled students with crushing debts for college degrees. If that weren't enough of a burden, some of the degrees provided by these for-profit institutions have failed to prepare students with a viable pathway to getting a good job and are often not even worth the paper on which they're printed." (Anne Blythe, THE NEWS & OBSERVER, 7/06/17).

Weekend TV

Political roundtable shows in North Carolina will be looking at a wide array of topics including child well-being, the end of the long legislative session and the opioid crisis. Here's what to look for:

- **Bottom Line:** This week's show includes a panel discussion of this week's news and a sit-down interview with Bob Luddy, president of CaptiveAire. **Hosts:** Sougata Mukherjee and Kelly McCullen (filling in for Joe Stewart) **Guests:** Colin Campbell, editor of the Insider and Jeff Tiberii, WUNC Capitol Bureau chief. **Airs:** Fridays at 10 p.m., Saturdays at 3 a.m., and Sundays at 8:30 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. on UNC-TV's North Carolina Channel or [online](#).
- **Education Matters:** This week guests will discuss how North Carolina stacks up to other states when it comes to child well-being. **Host:** Keith Poston **Guests:** Secretary of the N.C. Department of Health and Human Services Dr. Mandy Cohen and Laila A. Bell, director of research and data at NC Child. **Airs:** Saturdays at 7:30 p.m. on WRAL, Sundays at 6:30 a.m. and Mondays at 3 p.m. on NC Channel, or anytime at [NCForum.org](#).
- **Front Row:** This week's show will have guests talk about the growing opioid crisis in North Carolina, the power struggle between the state superintendent and the state board of education, President Trump's tweet showing him body-slamming the CNN logo, and his timeframe for his domestic agenda. **Host:** Marc Rotterman. **Guests:** Mitch Kokai of The John Locke Foundation, Rep. Ed Hanes, D-Forsyth, Jonah Kaplan, senior political reporter for ABC 11 News and Donald Bryson with Americans for Prosperity **Airs:** Friday 8:30 p.m.

on UNC-TV, 9 p.m. on the NC Channel, Saturday 4 p.m. on the NC Channel, and Sunday at 9:30 a.m. on the NC Channel.

- **NC Spin:** Panelists this week discuss this year's legislative session, state retiree benefits, and how to land big industrial relocations. **Host:** Tom Campbell. **Guests:** Chris Fitzsimon of NC Policy Watch, author John Hood, political consultant Brad Crone and Becki Gray of The John Locke Foundation. **Airs:** Times vary by market. Details can be found online at [NC Spin](#).
- **On the Record:** This week's show examines the end of the long legislative session including redistricting and the resolution to create a committee to investigate Secretary of State Elaine Marshall. **Host:** David Crabtree. **Guests:** Political consultant Brad Crone and Becki Gray of The John Locke Foundation. **Airs:** Saturday, 7 p.m. on WRAL-TV, with recordings available online at [wral.com](#).

(THE INSIDER, 7/07/17).

Charter Schools

North Carolina families and teachers will find out in the next two months which low-performing elementary schools could be turned over to charter school operators in 2018.

The state's Innovative School District, originally called the Achievement School District, is a controversial new effort to boost student achievement at low-performing schools. Eric Hall, the district's superintendent, launched the program on Thursday by laying out a timeline in which at least two schools will join for the 2018-19 school year and up to three more schools will join in 2019.

The new district has come under fire from critics, including many Democratic state lawmakers and the N.C. Association of Educators, who have questioned turning public schools over to education management organizations and charter management organizations. Hall stressed Thursday that the district is about partnering with local communities to provide a better education for students. "It's not about takeover," said Hall, who was hired in March after having served as CEO of Communities in Schools in North Carolina. "It's about how we're creating innovative conditions in local communities in partnership with those communities and those schools that's going to promote equity and opportunity for the students that we serve."

The legislature passed a law last year creating the state takeover of five schools, making North Carolina one of several states to try the achievement district model.

In Tennessee, students in Achievement District Schools have not done better academically than students in comparable low-performing schools that weren't taken over.

Hall acknowledged the "mixed results" in other states but said North Carolina has a chance to successfully re-imagine the model.

Hall will recommend by October which schools to be put in the program. The State Board of Education will vote by Dec. 15 on at least two schools that will be taken over in the 2018-19 school year. At the same time, Hall will review the management companies that will be selected by the State Board to run the district's schools. The companies would run the schools for five to eight years.

School boards will have until Feb. 1 to either transfer their schools to the program or to close them.

State Board members praised Hall Thursday for his plan.

"You've got a great plan," said Bill Cobey, chairman of the State Board. "It's not going to be easy. It's going to be tough, but it all starts with a good mission, a good plan. I'm excited about what you're getting ready to do." (T. Keung Hui, THE NEWS & OBSERVER, 7/06/17).

Sharpe Meeting

The office of Gov. Roy Cooper met with members of the Pitt County District Attorney's office to discuss the Dontae Sharpe case, but no decision had been made about the case as of Wednesday. Pitt County District Attorney Kimberly Robb and two assistant district attorneys met with members of Cooper's staff last week to give them information about the case.

The governor's office is reviewing Sharpe's case after his supporters petitioned the governor to free Sharpe, claiming that he is innocent of the murder of George Radcliffe.

"No decision has been made on the case, and the Governor's Office is continuing to review information," said Noelle Talley, deputy communications director for Cooper, in an email Wednesday.

Sharpe, 42, was convicted of first-degree murder in July 1995 in Pitt County for the murder of Radcliffe and was sentenced to life in prison. He currently is imprisoned at Johnston Correctional Institute and has served 22 years of his life sentence.

Sharpe's supporters say that one of the key witnesses against Sharpe recanted her story. Charlene Johnson, who was a young teenager at the time, said she saw Sharpe shoot Radcliffe after Sharpe got into an argument near the corner of Sheppard and West Sixth streets while standing next to Radcliffe's pickup truck. She testified to that during his trial, but later recanted her story saying she was pressured to testify against Sharpe. There was no physical evidence that tied Sharpe to the murder.

Sharpe has maintained his innocence since his conviction. His supporters -- which have grown to include the N.C. NAACP and the Rev. William Barber, and recently the Rev. Al Sharpton, who came to Greenville to speak on Sharpe's behalf -- are pushing for his exoneration. The Duke Innocence Project has studied his case and supports Sharpe's claim that he is innocent.(Beth Velliquette, THE (Greenville) DAILY REFLECTOR, 7/06/17).

GenX Monitoring

Federal health regulators are closely tracking developments of an unregulated chemical that has been found in the Cape Fear River in recent years, even if they do not plan on launching an investigation. The Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR) studies how hazardous substances found in the environment affect public health, including 13 investigations involving the class of chemicals that includes GenX, the substance found in the Cape Fear.

"ATSDR is staying abreast of work being conducted by the EPA, the National Toxicology Program, the Food and Drug Administration, and other federal entities, but is not planning a study or other actions at this site," an agency spokesperson said.

ATSDR, which works closely with the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) is providing technical assistance to the N.C. Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), officials said last week. ATSDR's active investigations center on exposure to per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) from aqueous film-forming firefighting foam. Sites are often military in nature, including Dover Air Force Base in Dover, Delaware; Joint Base Cape Cod in Cape Cod, Mass.; and Naval Air Warfare Center in Warminster, Pennsylvania.

The North Carolina site differs in that it is a manufacturing site. Chemours, and before that DuPont, has been releasing GenX into the Cape Fear River on-and-off since 1980 as a discharge from a vinyl ether process being conducted at its Fayetteville Works plant. Late last month the company said it had stopped that wastewater release -- something confirmed by state regulators.(Kevin Maurer, WILMINGTON STAR-NEWS, 7/06/17).

Candidate Filing

Candidate filing for local elections across North Carolina begins at noon Friday (July 7) and runs through noon Friday, July 21. Local elections are held between September and November, depending on the rules governing particular types of election contests. This year, more than 1,000 contests will be held across the state. "We hope that many candidates sign up to run for local office over the next two weeks and that voters across the state make sure they are registered to cast ballots in their hometown elections," said Kim Westbrook Strach, executive director of the Bipartisan State Board of Elections & Ethics Enforcement. Candidates for local office must file notices of candidacy with the proper county board of elections to be listed on ballots in the primary or general elections. Candidates must be at least 21 years old. They also must live and be registered to vote in the electoral district for the office being sought.(NEWS RELEASE, 7/06/17).

School Bankruptcy

Jireh Preparatory Academy in Matthews and its athletic program, Jireh Prep Athletics, Inc., have filed for bankruptcy protection, just months after a class-action suit alleged it did not follow through on promises made to help students win recruitment by NCAA schools. Documents for a Chapter 7 bankruptcy were filed Wednesday in U.S. Bankruptcy Court Western District of North

Carolina. The filing says the school, a nonprofit, owes about 50 creditors nearly \$88,000, but has assets of less than \$65,000. The academy has no money in any of its bank accounts, according to the documents.

The Charlotte Observer profiled the school's football coach in 2007, and reported that Jireh Prep's mission was to provide an education and discipline primarily for students who struggled at other schools. A Facebook page for the school says it helps young men "reach the next level in athletics and academics." Students take NCAA approved core classes, the site says.

Court documents suggest the school saw a steep drop in students this year, following the filing of a class-action lawsuit in November by a student from Cumberland County. In 2015 and 2016, the school claims to have received about \$750,000 annually in tuition payments. So far this year, payments fell to \$6,390, court documents state.

Former student Evan Rhodes of Cumberland County filed the class-action complaint in Mecklenburg County Superior Court , alleging the school failed to deliver on its promises to students, who had to pay between \$13,000 and \$14,000 a semester.(Mark Price and Maria David, THE CHARLOTTE OBSERVER, 7/06/17).

Driver's Ed

Driver's education in North Carolina continues unchanged after the General Assembly failed to pass legislation that would have made parents responsible for the upfront costs. That means Pitt County Schools will continue charging students \$60 to take the driver's education course that is provided by North Carolina Driving School, a Winterville-based company. The school system will fund the balance of the cost which is about \$240 per pupil. "We are certainly pleased that (legislators) continue to see the importance of the driver's education program. The House is very supportive of driver's education and we're glad they worked with the Senate to include it in the final budget," said Mark Smith, director of operations for North Carolina Driving School, which provides driver's education in 39 counties.

The budget provided \$27.39 million annually for statewide driver's education in this year's budget, said a spokeswoman with the N.C. Department of Public Instruction. The money comes from the state's Civil Penalty and Forfeiture Fund.

Senate President Pro-Tem Phil Berger, R-Rockingham, said changes are needed in the state's driver's education program because not enough students are passing the learner's permit test even after multiple attempts.

The Senate proposal would have required families to pay for their child's driver's education training up front, an amount that could reach \$400. In the Senate proposal a family would be reimbursed up to \$275 of the cost if the child passed their permit test on the first attempt. Opponents of the Senate's plan said shifting costs wouldn't guarantee improved student achievement on the permitting test. They worried that teenagers who couldn't afford the cost would wait until they are 18 to take the permitting test.(Ginger Livingston, THE (Greenville) DAILY REFLECTOR, 7/06/17).

Bennett President

Bennett College has named Phyllis Worthy Dawkins the school's 18th president. She served as interim president since August 2016, when Rosalind Fuse-Hall resigned. Dawkins arrived at Bennett in December 2015 as the school's provost after serving as interim president at Cheyney University, a black college outside of Philadelphia, Pa., the school said Wednesday in a news release announcing Dawkins as president. She has also worked at Dillard University in New Orleans and Johnson C. Smith University in Charlotte.

With the interim tag removed, Dawkins' goals are to: increase enrollment and retention; strengthen academic offerings; increase funding and strengthen the accreditation status, according to the release. Sen. Gladys Robinson, D-Guilford, chair of the school's Board of Trustees, said in the release that she is "pleased with Dr. Dawkins' performance during the period" that she served as interim president at Bennett.(Andre L. Taylor, GREENSBORO NEWS & RECORD, 7/06/17).

Festival Conflict

Organizers of the NC Pride festival and parade in Durham said Thursday they will solve the date conflict with this year's event, scheduled for Sept. 30, which is also the Jewish holiday of Yom Kippur. Over the past week, Pride organizers have faced backlash from the Jewish community and beyond over the date, the holiest day of the year on the Jewish calendar. "We're going to solve that no matter what it takes," said John Short of NC Pride. He said the Pride committee, who are volunteers, will meet this weekend to come up with a solution. "Exactly how we'll solve that, we don't know," he said.

The announcement of this year's NC Pride date held each fall drew many frustrated, disappointed and angry responses from the community.

At first, Pride apologized for the date but did not change the schedule, asking instead for forgiveness and promising to do better. On Thursday, Short said the committee was trying to rework the event and hoped to make an announcement next week.

Short said that the committee includes Jewish members, but because organizers didn't have previous conflicts with the holidays, they let it slip their minds. Going forward, that will change. "We'll develop a solution that will be able to be carried over in the future," Short said.(Dawn Baumgartner Vaughan, DURHAM HERALD-SUN, 7/06/17).

Running

Charles Francis, a local attorney and businessman, wants to be the next mayor of Raleigh. Francis announced Thursday that he will run for the mayor's seat in the October election, facing off against incumbent Nancy McFarlane. "We need a Mayor who will focus on the real issues facing real people," Francis said in a statement. "I will be an advocate for affordable housing, living wages for all City employees, increased economic mobility, a transit plan that is reliable and a commitment to innovation and service at City Hall."

Francis, a Democrat, poses a unique challenge for McFarlane, who's seeking her fourth term as mayor. Though she's registered as unaffiliated, the Wake County Democratic Party has supported her for years as she fended off opponents -- most of them Republicans.

McFarlane handily defeated her opponents in each election. She garnered 61 percent of the vote in 2011 against Republicans Billie Jean Redmond and Randall Williams, 72 percent in 2013 against Republican Bob Weltzin and Venita Peyton, an unaffiliated candidate, and 74 percent against Weltzin in 2015.

A native of Raleigh, Francis graduated from Sanderson High School. He attended Princeton University and earned a law degree from Duke University.

Francis is a former federal prosecutor and launched a private law practice, The Francis Law Firm, in 1994. He is a founding director of North State Bank. Francis has a bit of experience in local politics: He was appointed to the Raleigh City Council in 1993. He said he has been active with civic groups and community affairs.

Francis criticized McFarlane in a statement. "Our City Government is static," he said. "The Mayor has allowed herself to be led around by staff and bureaucrats while too often the voices of our citizens aren't heard, respected or understood.(Paul A. Specht, THE NEWS & OBSERVER, 7/06/17).

Named

The N.C. Department of Transportation announced that Torre Jessup was sworn in Thursday as Commissioner of Motor Vehicles by N.C. Supreme Court Justice Michael Morgan. Jessup is a Winston-Salem native and has resided in Mecklenburg County for more than 20 years. Jessup most recently served as vice president of public policy and external affairs at Blue Bloodhound, a start-up technology company serving the trucking industry. He also served for 20 years in the office of former North Carolina Congressman Mel Watt as district director and in various liaison roles. As commissioner, Jessup will oversee the daily operations of the state's Division of Motor Vehicles.(News Release, 7/06/17).

Occupancy Tax

Less than a week after receiving authority from the state legislature, the Rowan County commissioners on Wednesday gave final approval to a merger between the county's two tourism authorities and a uniform 6 percent occupancy tax. Currently, hotels, motels and other lodging

businesses in Salisbury pay a 6 percent occupancy tax. Outside the city limits, a 3 percent occupancy tax applies. Starting Sept. 1, all hotels, motels and lodging businesses will be subject to a 6 percent countywide tax. The city's occupancy tax authority will be repealed at 11:59 p.m. Aug. 31 as a result of commissioners' vote on Wednesday.

Commissioners were given the authority to make the taxing and tourism changes as a result of legislation handled by Rep. Carl Ford, R-Rowan. Ford's proposal, contained in Senate Bill 552, passed the N.C. General Assembly and became law at 1 a.m. Friday. His proposal was the result of a request by the Salisbury-Rowan Convention and Visitors Bureau in March. That meeting included discussion about the fact that any new hotel outside Salisbury would have a tax advantage over those in the city limits.(Josh Bergeron, THE SALISBURY POST, 7/06/17).

Substation Plans

Duke Energy is powering forward with a proposed Asheville substation planned at the site of the old Hunter Volvo dealership. The energy company doesn't own the property, which is located at the intersection of Patton and Clingman avenues, but it does have it under contract. Duke Energy Communications Manager Jason Walls said the new substation is needed because of the rapid expansion of downtown Asheville. "You look around the city skyline, and you see the construction cranes and you have about 14 new hotels that are being built in our community and you have a lot of new restaurants and breweries and other things that require electricity," Walls said.

Surrounding neighborhood residents raised concerns about the aesthetics of the substation being consistent with the overall appearance of the neighborhood. Daniel Jimenez, developer for an apartment complex across the street from the proposed substation, said he was not happy when he heard Duke Energy was building on the property, but he felt negative effects could be minimized. "I'm not thrilled about the idea of a substation going on a 4-acre piece of downtown property. I feel like there are other ways it could have been developed," Jimenez said. "But I understand that Duke Energy is in dire, dire need for finding a new location for a downtown substation. My only suggestion was to make sure that this becomes something that does not detract from the neighborhood."(Arijit Sen, THE ASHEVILLE CITIZEN-TIMES, 7/06/17).

Legislative Studies and Meetings

Items in **Bold** are new listings.

LB: Legislative Building

LOB: Legislative Office Building.

More Information: <http://ncleg.net/LegislativeCalendar/>

Thursday, Aug. 3

- Noon | House convenes in session.
- Noon | Senate convenes in session.

N.C. Government Meetings and Hearings

Items in **BOLD** are new listings.

Monday, July 10

- 3 p.m. | The UNC Campus Security Committee: Subcommittee on Training Guidance meets, Conference Room C, Spangler Building, Chapel Hill. Contact: Josh Ellis, [919-962-4629](tel:919-962-4629).

Tuesday, July 11

- 8 a.m. | The NC Board of Funeral Service Traineeship Committee meets, 1033 Wade Avenue, Suite 108, Raleigh.

- 8:30 a.m. | The state Board of Examiners of Plumbing, Heating & Fire Sprinkler Contractors Formal Hearing meets, 1109 Dresser Ct., Board Room, Raleigh.
- CANCELLED - 8:30 a.m. | The Fund Development and Communications Committee of The North Carolina Partnership for Children, Inc. meets, 1100 Wake Forest Road, Raleigh. Contact: Yvonne Huntley, [919-821-9573](#).
- 9 a.m. | The N.C. Commission for Public Health hold public hearing on proposed rule changes, Cardinal Room, 5605 Six Forks Road, Raleigh.
- 9 a.m. | The N.C. Council of State meets, Commission Room 5034, Fifth floor of the Administration Building, 116 West Jones St., Raleigh.
- 9 a.m. | The N.C. Board of Pharmacy meets, 6015 Farrington Road, Board Room Suite 201, Chapel Hill.
- 9 a.m. | The state Board of Funeral Service meets, 1033 Wade Avenue, Suite 108, Raleigh.
- 10 a.m. | The N.C. Coastal Resources Commission Variance meets (if necessary), DCM Regional Offices, Wilmington.
- 11 a.m. | The UNC Campus Security Committee: Subcommittee on Data Collection Protocol meets, Conference Room B, Spangler Building, Chapel Hill. Contact: Josh Ellis, [919-962-4629](#).
- **1 p.m. | The North Carolina Coastal Resources Commission meets to discuss flood maps, coastal resilience, and land use planning, Holiday Inn, 203 S.W. Greenville Boulevard, Greenville.**
- 2:30 p.m. | The N.C. Local Government Commission meets, 3200 Atlantic Ave., Longleaf Building, Raleigh.

Wednesday, July 12

- 9 a.m. | The state Consumer and Family Advisory Committee of DHHS meets, Biggs Dr., Raleigh.
- 9 a.m. | Environmental Management Commission meets, Ground Floor Hearing Room, Archdale Building, 512 N. Salisbury St., Raleigh.
- 12 p.m. | The UNC Campus Security Committee: Subcommittee on Security Training Conference meets, Conference Room B, Spangler Building, Chapel Hill. Contact: Josh Ellis, [919-962-4629](#).

Thursday, July 13

- 9 a.m. | Environmental Management Commission meets, Ground Floor Hearing Room, Archdale Building, 512 N. Salisbury St., Raleigh.

Friday, July 14

- 9 a.m. | The N.C. Board of Architecture hold public hearing on proposed rule changes, 127 W. Hargett St., #304, Raleigh.

Monday, July 17

- 11 a.m. | The Executive Committee of The North Carolina Partnership for Children meets, 1100 Wake Forest Road, Raleigh. Contact: Yvonne Huntley, [919-821-9573](#).

Tuesday, July 18

- 1:30 p.m. | The Accountability Committee of The North Carolina Partnership for Children meets, 1100 Wake Forest Road, Raleigh. Contact: Yvonne Huntley, [919-821-9573](#).

Wednesday, July 19

- 9 a.m. | The N.C. Plant Conservation Board meets, N.C. Cooperative Extension Service Watauga County Center Conference, Room 971 W. King St., Boone.

Thursday, July 20

- 10 a.m. | The N.C. Rules Review Commission meets, Administrative Hearings office, Rules Review Commission Room, 1711 New Hope Church Road, Raleigh.

Tuesday, July 25

- 9 a.m. | The N.C. Code Officials Qualification Board holds public hearing on proposed rule changes, 1st Floor Hearing Room, Room 131 (Albemarle Building), 325 N. Salisbury St., Raleigh.
- 1 p.m. | The Board Development Committee of The North Carolina Partnership for Children meets, 1100 Wake Forest Road, Raleigh. Contact: Yvonne Huntley, [919-821-9573](tel:919-821-9573).

Thursday, July 27

- 9 a.m. | The NC Wildlife Resources Commission meets, WRC Centennial Campus, 1751 Varsity Dr., Raleigh.

Monday, July 31

- 12 p.m. | The N.C. State Board of Elections hold public hearing on proposed rule changes, State Board of Elections Office, 441 N. Harrington St., Raleigh.

Thursday, Aug. 3

- TBD | The Golden LEAF Foundation's board meets, TBD. Contact: Jenny Tinklepaugh, [888-684-8404](tel:888-684-8404).

Wednesday, Aug. 16

- 10:30 a.m. | The Criminal Justice Education and Training Standards Commission holds public hearing on proposed rule changes, Wake Technical Community College-Public Safety Training Center, 321 Chapanoke Road, Raleigh.

Thursday, Aug. 17

- 10 a.m. | The N.C. Rules Review Commission meets, Administrative Hearings office, Rules Review Commission Room, 1711 New Hope Church Road, Raleigh.

Wednesday, Sept. 13

- 9 a.m. | Environmental Management Commission meets, Ground Floor Hearing Room, Archdale Building, 512 N. Salisbury St., Raleigh.

Thursday, Sept. 14

- 9 a.m. | Environmental Management Commission meets, Ground Floor Hearing Room, Archdale Building, 512 N. Salisbury St., Raleigh.

Thursday, Sept. 21

- 10 a.m. | The N.C. Rules Review Commission meets, Administrative Hearings office, Rules Review Commission Room, 1711 New Hope Church Road, Raleigh.

Thursday, Sept. 28

- 10:30 a.m. | The Standard Commercial Fishing License Eligibility Board to the N.C. Division of Marine Fisheries meets, N.C. Division of Marine Fisheries' Wilmington District Office, 127 North Cardinal Dr. Extension, Wilmington.

Thursday, Oct. 5

- TBD | The Golden LEAF Foundation's board meets, TBD. Contact: Jenny Tinklepaugh, [888-684-8404](tel:888-684-8404).
- TBD | The NC Wildlife Resources Commission meets, WRC Centennial Campus, 1751 Varsity Dr., Raleigh.

Thursday, Oct. 19

- 10 a.m. | The N.C. Rules Review Commission meets, Administrative Hearings office, Rules Review Commission Room, 1711 New Hope Church Road, Raleigh.

Wednesday, Nov. 8

- 9 a.m. | Environmental Management Commission meets, Ground Floor Hearing Room, Archdale Building, 512 N. Salisbury St., Raleigh.

Thursday, Nov. 9

- 9 a.m. | Environmental Management Commission meets, Ground Floor Hearing Room, Archdale Building, 512 N. Salisbury St., Raleigh.

Thursday, Nov. 16

- 10 a.m. | The N.C. Rules Review Commission meets, Administrative Hearings office, Rules Review Commission Room, 1711 New Hope Church Road, Raleigh.

Thursday, Dec. 7

- TBD | The Golden LEAF Foundation's board meets, TBD. Contact: Jenny Tinklepaugh, [888-684-8404](tel:888-684-8404).
- TBD | The NC Wildlife Resources Commission meets, 1751 Varsity Dr., Raleigh.

Thursday, Dec. 21

- 10 a.m. | The N.C. Rules Review Commission meets, Administrative Hearings office, Rules Review Commission Room, 1711 New Hope Church Road, Raleigh.

Wednesday, Jan. 10

- 9 a.m. | Environmental Management Commission meets, Ground Floor Hearing Room, Archdale Building, 512 N. Salisbury St., Raleigh.

Thursday, Jan. 11

- 9 a.m. | Environmental Management Commission meets, Ground Floor Hearing Room, Archdale Building, 512 N. Salisbury St., Raleigh.

N.C. Dept. of Environmental Quality

The N.C. Dept. of Environment and Natural Resources has a new name - the N.C. Dept. of Environmental Quality. More Information: <http://portal.ncdenr.org/web/guest/home>

Tuesday, July 18

- **6 p.m. | The N.C. Division of Water Resources hold public meeting on Atlantic Coast Pipeline Water Quality Certification, Fayetteville Technical Community College Cumberland Hall Auditorium at 2201 Hull Rd., Fayetteville.**

Thursday, July 20

- **6 p.m. | The N.C. Division of Water Resources hold public meeting on Atlantic Coast Pipeline Water Quality Certification, Nash Community College Brown Auditorium at 522 N. Old Carriage Road, Rocky Mount.**

Thursday, Aug. 3

- **2 p.m. | The state Department on Air Quality holds public hearing concerning incorporation of 2015 Ozone Ambient Standard and Readoption, 2145 Suttle Ave., Charlotte.**

N.C. Utilities Commission Hearing Schedule

Dobbs Building
430 North Salisbury Street
Raleigh, North Carolina

More Information: <http://www.ncuc.commerce.state.nc.us/activities/activit.htm>

Monday, July 10

- Staff Conference

Tuesday, July 11

- 9:30 a.m. | T-4635 Sub 0 ...Application For Certificate of Exemption to Transport Household Goods, Dobbs - Commission Hearing Room, 2nd floor, Room 2115.

Monday, July 17

- Staff Conference

Monday, July 24

- Staff Conference

Monday, July 31

- Staff Conference

UNC Board of Governors

Board Room of the UNC Center for School Leadership Development
140 Friday Center Drive, Chapel Hill (**remote meeting locations in BOLD**)
More Information: <https://www.northcarolina.edu/bog/schedule.php>

Friday, July 14

- TBA | UNC Asheville, Asheville.

Friday, Sept. 8

- TBA | The UNC Board of Governors, C.S.L.D. Building, Chapel Hill.

Friday, Nov. 3

- TBA | The UNC Board of Governors, C.S.L.D. Building, Chapel Hill.

Friday, Dec. 15

- TBA | The UNC Board of Governors, C.S.L.D. Building, Chapel Hill.

Friday, Jan. 26, 2018

- TBA | The UNC Board of Governors, C.S.L.D. Building, Chapel Hill.

Friday, March 23, 2018

- TBA | UNC Wilmington, Wilmington.

Friday, May 25, 2018

- TBA | The UNC Board of Governors, C.S.L.D. Building, Chapel Hill.

Other Meetings and Events of Interest

Items in **BOLD** are new listings.

Sunday, July 30

- TBD | The NC Bankers Association host 81st Annual NC School of Banking, William & Ida Friday Center, UNC-Chapel Hill. The conference concludes on Aug. 4.

Friday, Sept. 8

- No Time Given | The 77th Annual National Folk Festival opens in Downtown Greensboro for its third year in the state. Contact: Kaitlin Smith, [336-373-7523](tel:336-373-7523), ext 246.

Sunday, Sept. 24

- TBD | The NC Bankers Association hold Young Bankers Conference, Crowne Plaza Asheville Resort, Asheville.

Wednesday, Oct. 11

- 10 a.m. | The Carolinas Air Pollution Control Association hold Technical Workshop and Forum, Hilton Myrtle Beach Resort, 10000 Beach Club Dr., Myrtle Beach.

Monday, Nov. 6

- TBD | The NC Bankers Association hold Women in Banking Conference, Renaissance Charlotte Southpark, 5501 Carnegie Blvd., Charlotte.

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